

Autumn 2

Newsletter

Merry Christmas

& HAPPY NEW YEAR



A Message from..Mrs Cumming

What an action-packed term! It is hard to believe that we are three months into the new school year - but looking through this newsletter we have packed a lot in!

Year 7s have settled into USH brilliantly and it is wonderful to see them take part in wider school life - most recently in the Christmas Concert where we saw the Y7 Mega Choir and had 13 brilliant Y7 readers. Y11 have impressed us with their focus during their mock exams and all years have been busy learning, getting involved and enjoying themselves as you will read about through the newsletter...

USHmas fever has taken over the school over the last few weeks! We have had secret elves, door decorating competitions, teaching competitions, the Christmas Concert (*the rendition of The Snowman made me shed a tear!*), reward events, Christmas trips and preparations for the highly anticipated annual USH Talent Show... our students never cease to amaze me with the way they get involved, support each other and make USH such a special place to work.



On behalf of all the staff at USH, we wish our students, families and wider community a happy, safe and restful Christmas break.

We can't wait to see you all in 2026 for another term of trips, clubs, lessons, celebrations and house competitions!

A Message from.. Chair of Governors

Parent Governor Election

As you will know, we recently invited parents and carers to stand for election as a parent governor. I am pleased to announce that Neil Glasspool was appointed to the role.



Upcoming Events

25-26

INSET Days
2 FEBRUARY
6 MARCH
26 JUNE

Want to stay up to date? You will find all our school dates, term times and INSET days right here: USH Calendar

08 JAN
Meet the Professionals Day

15 JAN
Y9 Parents' Evening

29 JAN
Y11 Parents' Evening

20 FEB
Staff Inset Day - closed to students

05 FEB
Y8 & Y9 Options Evening

16 FEB
Spring Half Term
16th February - 20th February

26 FEB
SEND Parent & Carer Network
6-7pm

02 MAR
Y10 Mock Careers Interviews
2nd March- 4th March

02 MAR
Y11 GCSE PE Moderation
2nd March- 30th April

05 MAR
Y8 Parents' Evening

05 MAR
World Book Day

06 MAR
Staff Inset Day - closed to students

We would like to remind families that nose piercings over the Christmas holidays are not advisable, as they do not comply with our school uniform and appearance policy.

Students must return in January meeting all uniform expectations, which includes **no facial piercings OR retainers**. If a student chooses to have a piercing during the break, it will need to be removed for school, even if it is newly done.

We appreciate your support in helping students return ready for learning and in full adherence to school guidelines

What's been happening in.. House Teams

Wow, what an amazing effort from everyone for Children in Need! Here's what went down:

🏃 House Lap Challenge: Every house ran their hearts out for the chance to SLIME Mr. Sykes! After an epic showdown, Engineers took the crown and got to cover him in slime!

👕 Non-Uniform Day: You all looked fantastic while helping raise money for a great cause.

💰 Total Raised: Together, we raised an incredible £1,365 for Children in Need! That's a huge difference thanks to YOU!

A massive thank you to everyone who joined in, ran those laps, and donated. You've shown what teamwork and kindness can do!









Spreading Christmas Cheer: **700 Presents Donated to SCRATCH!**

We are thrilled to share the incredible success of our Christmas Present Drive! Thanks to the generosity and kindness of our school community, we collected 700 presents for SCRATCH, a Southampton-based charity dedicated to supporting families in need.

Your contributions will make a real difference, ensuring that children and families across our local area experience the joy of Christmas. This achievement reflects the power of compassion and community spirit; thank you to everyone who donated, volunteered and helped make this possible.

Together, we've brought smiles, hope and festive cheer to those who need it most. Well done, everyone!







The past two weeks have been packed with festive cheer as USHmas celebrations took over the school! From creative tutor activities to the much-loved Design Your Tutor Door competition, excitement has been building across our Houses. Voting has happened and our winners revealed on social media!

Students have also been spreading kindness by completing teacher appreciation cards, which will be delivered by our very own Christmas elves. To round off the celebrations, Friday 19th December promises a fantastic finale with Christmas Jumper Day (£1 donation) and the return of our annual USH Talent Show. This is always a highlight of the year and we're thrilled to showcase the incredible talent within our school community. Keep an eye on social media for the announcement of the winner later that day!

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas break from the Heads of House!

What's been happening in.. Food & Nutrition



It has been a fantastic end to the term in the Food Department, with students completing practical assessment cooks in response to creative briefs. The standard of work has been exceptional and it has been a fun, energetic way to finish the term.

Year 9 students completed their first personalised brief cook, choosing a sweet shortcrust pastry dish. We saw an impressive range of outcomes, from lemon meringue pies to creative Dubai chocolate tarts, showing great confidence and skill.

Year 10 students brought nutrition theory to life by designing and cooking healthy, exciting meals for a specific group, including teenagers, athletes and people with type 2 diabetes. We were blown away by the quality, technical skill and commitment on show, reflecting our belief that food can be good for people and the planet while tasting amazing.

We also ran our in-school heat of the Rotary Young Chef Competition, where students cooked a healthy two-course meal in two hours. Congratulations to our three winners, who will represent Upper Shirley High at the regional heat in January at Southampton City College.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Mr Davies and the Food Department.

Design & Technology

In Year 7 we have been learning about sustainable designing and the impact of deforestation and plastics pollution on the environment. The students then used these themes to write their own stories and develop them into beautifully illustrated pop-up books.

In Year 8 our students have been learning about electric circuits, so that they could design and building their own colour changing lamps. The students learnt to solder their own lamp circuits and deepened their CAD and CAM skills.

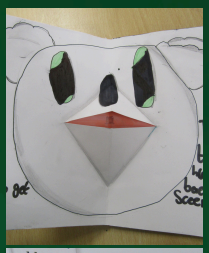
In Year 9 Students have been learning joinery techniques and then used these skills to design and construct their own phone stands from wood. They also learnt some new technical drawing skills when developing their design ideas.

In Year 10 students have been completing the Design Ventura project working from a live brief from the Design Museum, London. Working in small groups the students have come up with some fantastic, sustainable and crowd-pleasing products that could be sold in the museum shop.

DT Club has been especially popular this term. Students have learnt how to use 2D Design to create bespoke Christmas decorations that were made using the laser cutter and then coloured with wood stains.





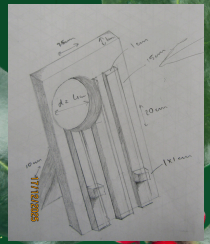












What's been happening in..

Careers







We have had a very busy term in the Careers Department and we have been able to run a number of exciting trips and workshops. We were delighted to welcome the English National Ballet into school this term, who ran a workshop for students across the school that had an interest in dance and then offered us 30 tickets for students to watch Sleeping Beauty at The Mayflower theatre, which the students thoroughly enjoyed.

We visited Brockenhurst College with a group of Year 9 students, where they took part in a science session that involved creating lactose free milk suitable for cats to drink! This was a great opportunity for students to see Brockenhurst College and hear from teachers at the college.

In addition to this, we were able to take a group of Year 9 students to the i-Construct day at Cemast in Fareham, where students met employers from the Construction industry and took part in some workshops. They had fun operating a digger, amongst other things and were tasked with developing a presentation about a company that they had met with during the day, the students did exceptionally well with this task and two of the groups won an award for their presentation skills for the day! This was an insightful day for students and gave them a broader insight into careers in the construction industry.

In addition to this, we took a group of Year 10 students to Siemens, where they gained an overview of careers in the rail and engineering industries. Ordnance Survey also delivered an immersive careers day on their site, which was a fantastic opportunity for students to find out more about the range of careers involved at OS including drone pilots and learning about how maps are created. Last but not least, we were able to take a group of Year 8 students to a beauty taster session at Fareham College where the students had a taster of a beauty course, which they all thoroughly enjoyed!

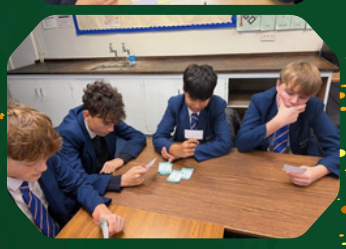
We are looking forward to the new year, which is full of activities, which we hope will help inspire students and help to broaden their options. If students ever want to find us, we are located just next to the library in the careers office.

Business Studies

Over the past four weeks, our business students have combined creativity with their classroom learning by designing and producing their own board games. Each game incorporated key concepts from this term's business lessons, challenging students to think innovatively about how to apply theory in a fun and interactive way.

After presenting their creations to the class, students enjoyed playing each other's game, turning learning into an exciting, hands-on experience!

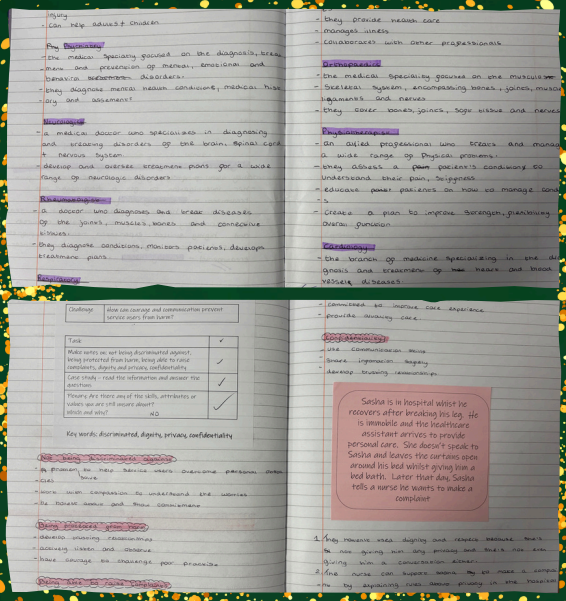






What's been happening in..

Health & Social Care



I have been incredibly impressed with how well all Health & Social Care students have settled into their course this year. Each class has been incredibly focused, willing to contribute and shown an immense amount of pride in their work.

Year 9 and 10 have been working on their Component 2 content this term learning about different health and social care professionals, the support they can provide and the skills, attributes and values that enable them to work effectively.

Year 11 have been focused on completing their final controlled assessments and have produced some fantastic work. Below are a couple of examples of excellent work from one of our Year 10 students.

Well done everyone; I am incredibly proud of you! Miss Baillie

Humanities

This term, a group of Year 8 students visited Ordnance Survey to take part in a GIS Day.

During the event, they explored how Geographical Information Systems are applied in everyday life. Students enjoyed a map symbols competition before heading outdoors to collect data around the OS headquarters using coordinates.

Back in the classroom, they used Digimaps to plot their findings and then see it come to life on the map. It was an engaging and enjoyable afternoon that left students inspired about the exciting career opportunities available at Ordnance Survey.



English





English and Drama students in Year 9 and Year 10 enjoyed a performance from Southampton based professional theatre company Theatre for Life on Monday 8th December.

The company performed their one act play 'When the Clouds Come', which explored an unlikely friendship between Eva, a neurodivergent young woman who comes to work for Sian, who is suffering with Alzheimer's.

Theatre for Life were hugely impressed with the way USH students engaged with the play, and student reviews of the show were glowing: 'It was amazing - the acting was brilliant!'

What's been happening in.. Personal Development

Student Personal Development has gone from strength to strength this term with more activities being packed into tutor time and assemblies to support their personal development, organisation and wellbeing.

This term we have launched our KS3 Leadership opportunities with over 60 students outside of the currently leadership team who signed up. These students are now running clubs of their own including Christian Union, Rubix Cube and Debate club.

Students within tutor have been doing weekly wellbeing tasks around World Mental Health Day and World First Aid Day to support the wellbeing of themselves and others.

They have also been attempting to improve their Numeracy Ninja and Algebra Assassins belt by completing their weekly numeracy tasks (KS3). Our KS4 students have been using their numeracy slots to continue working on Maths exam questions as an extra practice opportunity to support in their Maths lessons, all of which has been celebrated in the 'Unlocking minds' assemblies.

New this year we have had our Connect and Reflect sessions where tutors have been supporting students in pastoral conversations. Wider school personal development events that have also been supported by tutor time are Grandparents' Remembrance Morning. It was our biggest event yet with nearly 250+ grandparents. Grandparents really enjoyed looking around the tutor projects and purchasing the hand made crochet poppies that the crochet club had made.

We are really proud of our Careers programme at USH which links nicely to student personal development ahead of post 16 options.

Lastly our clubs programme has been very well attended. With 60 clubs on offer this term, we have had a huge selection for students at lunchtime and after school that are run by staff and students.

Want a club but it is not on the timetable? Go and see Mrs Fortune for more information in the KS3 office (Cedar building).

Monday Clubs

Lunchtime

English Homework	Youth Alpha
Support with English homework	*Discuss your beliefs and find out more about Christianity*
ENG4	RS1

After School

Debate Club	Hellenism Club	Newspaper club
Debate key topic areas with friends	*Learn about Greek mythology*	*Write newspaper articles*
CZ1	MA7	ENG3



Tuesday Clubs

Lunchtime

Manage Animae	Quiz Club	1v1 Football
Draw animae with students	*Test your knowledge to win prizes*	*Student led football*
TBC	ICT 2	BACK PLAYGROUND



After School

Film Club	Guitar Club	Music GCSE Intervention	Netball Club	Basketball Club	Creative iMedia
An opportunity to share film ideas and review with friends	*All abilities welcome to come and play guitar*		*All years-a chance to learn netball skills ready for match play*	*Year 8, 9, a chance to learn basketball skills ready for match play*	*NEA Resubmission*
ENG4	MUS2	MUS1	NETBALL COURT	SPORTS HALL	ICT1

Year 11 English Intervention	Dungeons & Dragons	Year 11 Photography	Year 11 Art
	Role play game with adventure		
ENG3	RS1	PG1	ART1



Wednesday Clubs

Lunchtime

Dungeons & Dragons	Pokemon
Role play game with adventure	*Play pokemon with staff and students*
RS1	HALL



After School

Computing / Minecraft Club	Choir	Year 11 Photography Intervention	Year 11 Textiles Intervention	Year 11 Music Intervention	Social football
Use the computers to play minecraft	*Learn new songs and be part of a group that perform in school events*				*Play football on the astro with friends*
ICT 2	MUS1	PG1	ART1	MUS2	Astro

Origami	KS3 Volleyball	Year 11 French Intervention	Year 11 Textiles Intervention	Year 11 Further Maths
All years welcome to learn how to make origami items	*Guest coach teaching skills and tactics for match play*			
MA5	GYM	MFL2	ART1	MA1

Crochet Club	Year 10 BTEC Sport Filming	Year 11 Sport BTEC Intervention
Join us for creative crochet fun	*Invitation only*	



Autumn 2 Friday Clubs

Lunchtime

Chess club	Rubix cube	Basketball Free Throw
Challenge friends, all year groups welcome	*Learn how to solve rubix cubes*	*All year groups welcome*
MFL 2	HUMS 7	BACK PLAYGROUND



After School

Dance club	Jazz Band	Table tennis club	Design Technology NEA Intervention.	Year 11 Art & Textiles Intervention
Student led club to learn dance routines	*Invite only*	*All years welcome*	*Week B ONLY*	
FITNESS ROOM	MUS1	GYM	DT1	ART 2

Autumn 2 Thursday Clubs

Lunchtime

Eco Committee	Geography Club	Board games	Wellbeing Club	Christian Union
Get involved with whole school projects	*Discover Places, Cultures, and Adventures Together*	*A quiet space to play board games*	*Somewhere to sit and focus on wellbeing*	*All welcome to learn about the Christian faith*
HUMS 5	HUMS 6	HUMS 7	HUMS7	FS1

After School

Creative Writing Club	Year 11 GCSE Maths Intervention	Touch Rugby	Fitness club	Year 11 Volleyball	Year 8 Social football
		All years welcome, learn skills to put into practise in games	*All years welcome to use the weight rooms having a go at challenges*	*Guest coach teaching skills na dtactics for match play*	*Play football with friends socially*
ENG4	See Maths Teacher	FIELD	FITNESS ROOM	SPORTS HALL	MUGA

Year 11 Art & Textiles Intervention	Year 11 Photography Intervention	Year 9 Homework Club	Year 11 Food NEA Intervention
ART 1	PG1	ICT 2	FD1

Warhammer Painting	GCSE Music Intervention	Year 11 PE Coursework Intervention
Bring your armies to Life. One brushstroke at a Time!		
LEARNING SUPPORT	MUS1	ICT 4



What's been happening in..

Year 11



This term has been action packed for Year 11.

We have been focusing on celebrating excellent attendance with a £10 voucher won by Milana and a reward breakfast for a select number of students.

We powered through the mock season and the whole year group really did themselves proud and the practice will go a long way for their Summer exams.

This week we have continued with the celebratory theme with our last reward assembly together as a year group, a hot chocolate and cookie morning alongside the Christmas lunch and reward trip to the panto!

Rest up Year 11, you deserve it. I look forward to seeing you in 2026!

Year 10



What a fantastic start to the year for Year 10!

Students have really stepped up, showing great commitment to their learning and have taken part in an attendance competition keeping everyone motivated.

Teachers have been full of praise for the positive attitude and effort in lessons, and it's been brilliant to see so many students starting to think about their future and explore their options.

To celebrate all that hard work, we have had theatre trips, pizza parties, hot chocolate and cookie parties and prizes in tutor.

We're so proud of the progress Year 10 have made and can't wait to see what they achieve next term!

Year 9



Year 9s have had an amazing first term starting their new options subjects, or as they call them, their 'sides'.

They have been thriving in new subjects such as Health and Social Care, Business and Photography.

I am really proud of how they have risen to the challenge as they head into the Spring term. We had a record entry of students in Year 9 wanting to be involved in KS3 student leadership in our launch at the start of the year, with a number of students being used to support with tours and recruitment.

What's been happening in..

Year 8



Wow Year 8! What a busy term this has been for you all!

You have impressed so many staff with your enthusiasm for learning and your attitude around the school. We always talk to you about making the most of the opportunities made available to you, and it has been lovely to see so many of you at after school clubs, in the choir, orchestra, sports teams and involved in leadership roles within lessons.

I hope you all have a very well deserved Christmas holiday and come back ready to make some important choices regarding your options!

Enjoy being around family and loved ones and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year. Mr Hall

Year 7



A massive well done to you all! You have absolutely smashed it so far!

It's fantastic to see so many of you involved in clubs and activities. Attendance has been amazing and I am so proud of the number of achievement points earned - over 100 points for those gaining their bronze badge!

I hope you have taken a moment to reflect on just how far you have come.

Have a lovely break, keep being your best and enjoy a wonderful Christmas holiday!

PE

It has been an exciting and successful period for sport across the school, with many of our teams showing great commitment, resilience and teamwork.

A huge congratulations to our **Under-14 Netball team** for their outstanding performance at the recent tournament. Battling through challenging weather conditions, the team showed determination and teamwork to secure an impressive 3rd place finish, earning well deserved medals. Their achievement was proudly celebrated in assemblies and they should be extremely proud of their efforts.

Our **Year 7 Football team** continue to go from strength to strength and are now just two away wins away from securing the league title. The team has shown excellent progress this season and we wish them the very best for their upcoming matches.

The **Under-16 Basketball team** still have five league matches remaining this term and we are looking forward to seeing their skills, teamwork and hard work put into practice.

Finally, our **Year 9 Sports Leaders** have been working alongside Year 7 PE classes, developing their leadership and communication skills while supporting younger students in lessons. This has been a fantastic opportunity for them to build confidence and gain valuable experience.

Well done to all students involved, we look forward to more sporting success as the term continues!

What's been happening in.. Religious Studies

The Light in the Darkness: Students Explore Holocaust History and Hanukkah

Our students completed a powerful project, "The Holocaust, Their Family, Me and Us: The Light in the Darkness, Noemie's Journey", inspired by Robert Rinder's documentaries. They studied Juliette Usach, a teacher who sheltered Jewish children at 'La Guespy' in France during WWII, risking her life to protect them and preserve their traditions, including Hanukkah.

Through photos, texts and artifacts, like a unique Hanukkiah made from tin chairs, students explored themes of humanitarian courage, religious tolerance and resilience. They learned Hanukkah's meaning - the miracle of light and its rituals: candle-lighting, dreidel games and festive foods.

The project ended with a poignant story from Rabbi Hugo Gryn, who recalled his father lighting a tiny Hanukkah flame in a concentration camp using their ration of margarine. His father said:
"*You can live three weeks without food, three days without water, but not three minutes without hope.*"

That flicker of light symbolized identity and courage in the darkest times, a message students will carry forward: even the smallest light can push away great darkness.

Christmas Lunches








What's been happening in..

End of Year Rewards



KS4 Reward Trip
A group of Year 10 and 11 students were selected to attend a special Christmas reward trip to the Mayflower Theatre to enjoy the pantomime.

This exciting opportunity was given to those who demonstrated USH values and exceeded expectations. Well done to all the students for their hard work and commitment.





KS3 Reward Trip
Yesterday, we held our KS3 reward trip, with 70 students enjoying a fantastic visit to the bowling alley and arcades. The trip was a reward for students who have demonstrated excellent attendance and punctuality and who consistently live out the USH values.

Students represented the school brilliantly and had a great time celebrating their hard work and positive attitudes. Well done to everyone who earned their place, we are very proud of you!











Hot Chocolate with Mr Sykes







This week, each year group had the opportunity to enjoy a special treat of hot chocolate with squirty cream and cookies alongside Mr Sykes and their Head of Year.

This reward was given in recognition of their excellent punctuality, strong attendance and the positive behaviour points they have worked hard to achieve.

It was a lovely way to celebrate their commitment and effort - a big well done to all students who took part and continue to set such a positive example.

What's been happening in..

Year 7 Disco







Year 8 Film Night







Christmas Concert

This term's Christmas Concert, Tuesday 16th December, was an amazing success.

We had nearly 100 students performing including an incredible amount of debut performances from our year 7 cohort.

Special congratulations to student vocal soloists

- Jack D Year 7 (Walking in the Air),
- Zena C Year 8 and Abi B Year 9 (Defying Gravity)
- Aiden D Year 11 (Jingle Bell Swing)
- Year 7 readers who delivered the story of how the Grinch Stole Christmas very poignantly.

We had a packed out audience with extra chairs and benches added to accommodate all guests which included parents and family members, staff, students and even a few recent leavers.

We're very grateful to all who came along and especially to all who donated or bought refreshments and raffle tickets. Proceeds will go towards the purchase of new equipment for future concerts such as new music stands and stand lights.

Mr Smith.











The USH Talent Show



We are

Hiring

Join our team

Teacher of Science

&

Pastoral Support Worker



...learning without limits

📍 Find out more and apply:
👉 Visit: uppershirleyhigh.org/staff-vacancies
👉 Email: recruitment@ushschool.org